



UWS Academic Portal

Female entrepreneurship in Africa

Nziku, Dina; Struthers, John

Published in:
Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development

DOI:
[10.1108/JSBED-03-2017-0115](https://doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-03-2017-0115)

Published: 18/06/2018

Document Version
Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication on the UWS Academic Portal](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
Nziku, D., & Struthers, J. (2018). Female entrepreneurship in Africa: strength of weak ties in mitigating principal-agent problems. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 25(3), 349-367.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-03-2017-0115>

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the UWS Academic Portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact pure@uws.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



Female Entrepreneurship in Africa: Strength of Weak Ties in Mitigating Principal-Agent Problems

Journal:	<i>Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development</i>
Manuscript ID	JSBED-03-2017-0115.R3
Manuscript Type:	Conceptual Paper
Keywords:	Women, Entrepreneurship, Principal-Agent, Strength of Weak Ties, Africa

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

Female Entrepreneurship in Africa: Strength of Weak Ties in Mitigating Principal-Agent Problems

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to develop a conceptual framework which combines the Strength of Weak Ties (SWT) concept with an innovative taxonomy for mitigating Principal-Agent conflicts. The taxonomy highlights the mechanisms through which African women can overcome the obstacles faced when setting up businesses.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The paper discusses the role of ‘weak ties’ networks in entrepreneurial activities and integrates the concept with the key parameters of the Principal-Agent paradigm. The aim is to develop a taxonomy (or scorecard) for mitigating the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Africa from a Principal-Agent perspective. Six Principal-Agent parameters are analysed namely: attitudes towards risk; behaviour-based versus targets based contracts; asymmetric information; risk sharing; transaction costs; and verification and monitoring costs.

Findings: With the aid of the taxonomy developed in the paper the authors analyse the channels through which ‘strength of weak ties’ networks may impact in mitigating the problems arising from the Principal-Agent paradigm. Some implications for women entrepreneurs in Africa are highlighted

Research Implications: The current conceptual study suggests that the ‘strength of weak ties’ concept can be used by African women entrepreneurs to mitigate Principal-Agent problems. The authors argue that the original Principal-Agent taxonomy developed in the paper fills a conceptual research gap in the existing literature. Embedding the SWT concept within a Principal-Agent framework will facilitate further research not only to understand African women entrepreneurs’ attitudes (and responses) towards risk and uncertainty. This will also facilitate greater understanding of the importance women attach to the role of incentives within their businesses.

Practical Implications: The taxonomy presents new insights for understanding the most serious constraints that hinder women entrepreneurs in Africa. The taxonomy will be the basis for a follow-up empirical paper on selected African countries.

Originality/Value: The originality of this study lies in the development of an innovative taxonomy which highlights the role of Strength of Weak Ties (SWT) social networks towards mitigating the Principal-Agent problem among African women entrepreneurs. The paper makes a significant contribution to the literature from a conceptual perspective.

Keywords: Women entrepreneurship, Principal-Agent, Strength of Weak Ties, Africa.

Type of paper: Conceptual

1. Introduction: Women entrepreneurs in an African context

Within developing countries, particularly in Africa, there is an emerging literature which highlights the unique obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs who start and develop their own businesses. There is also an expanding literature which focuses on the role of social networks in facilitating female entrepreneurship. Networks are groups of actors with a relationship or tie that connects them (Hoang and Antoncic,2003).The relevance of networks for an entrepreneur lies in the presence of other entrepreneurs who may work in customer and supplier companies, business services providers, or as finance professionals. They may also involve legal and governmental institutions. The information and ideas circulating within these networks can influence a person’s attitude towards business start-up. They can also be a key resource for starting, growing and sustaining the business.

The economic development of an efficient private sector in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is of critical importance in delivering sustainable economic growth as well as for raising the living standards of people in the region. Entrepreneurship is a major driver of the economy in developed and developing countries alike (Ramadani, 2013; Nziku, 2016). The World Bank’s 2012 World Development Report on Gender Equality and Development suggests that Sub-Saharan Africa had approximately 61% of women participating in the labour force compared with 26% in the Middle East and North Africa, and 64% in East Asia and the Pacific (World Bank, 2012) Moreover, the literature suggests that within African countries there are more females than males who become involved in entrepreneurial activities (GEM, 2017; Nziku, 2016; Brush *et al*, 2010). Yet, there are a variety of unfavourable factors within local regulatory, normative, and cognitive systems which place additional burdens on women entrepreneurs in their attempts to start-up and expand their businesses (Nziku, 2013, 2016; Brixiová and Kangoye,2016; Halkias *et al*, 2011; Amine and Staub, 2009; Naude and Havenga, 2005).

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2017) has highlighted the challenges facing African women entrepreneurs. Although at the societal level private sector entrepreneurship in Sub-Saharan Africa exceeds that in developed countries, the main challenge lies in raising the level range, and depth of women entrepreneurship. There is also a perceived need to conduct

more empirical studies on female entrepreneurship within Africa as existing studies tend to cover a small number of countries on the continent (GEM, 2017). Richardson *et al*, (2004) suggest that unless data on the level of entrepreneurship among African women entrepreneurs is improved, it is likely that those women who are actually in entrepreneurial activities will tend to be overlooked by official statistics. This is due to the fact that many African business women often tend not to be considered or even regard themselves as owning businesses.

This paper has been structured into 8 sections: Section 1 contains the introduction and the context for the study; Section 2 highlights some of the major barriers that women entrepreneurs face in African countries; Section 3 reviews literature on the role of social networks in facilitating women entrepreneurship; Section 4 discusses the concept of ‘strength of weak ties’ proposed by Granovetter (1973, 1983); Section 5 identifies a research gap by embedding the SWT concept within the Principal-Agent framework through an innovative taxonomy; Section 6 analyses the channels through which the SWT concept can mitigate Principal-Agent problems when applied by women entrepreneurs in Africa; Section 7 suggests an area of future empirical research based on the taxonomy, some tentative conclusions, and policy implications.

2. Barriers facing African women entrepreneurs

Women entrepreneurs in developing countries often face many barriers. According to Nziku (2012, 2016) in studies of women entrepreneurs in Tanzania, the most common barriers were inter alia: personal, cultural, stereotypes and discrimination, access to capital, lack of networks, access to information technology, access to market, and poor education. Such obstacles are common across sub-Saharan African countries as well as in other developing countries (Minniti and Naude, 2010; Jamali, 2009). Though many developing countries have high levels of female participation in self-employment, insufficient recognition is given to their contribution and many of the challenges they face are overlooked (Davidson and Burke, 2004; Diaz-Garcia *et al*, 2016).

Halkias *et al* (2011), in a study of Nigerian female small business owners highlighted the many challenges they face including: difficulty in securing adequate finance/capital, low labour force participation generally, as well as low levels of productivity. Similarly, Nziku (2013) found that apart from personal and family problems, 47% of women entrepreneurs had difficulty in accessing capital and acquiring appropriate information during the early stages of starting up. Only 16% of Tanzanian women entrepreneurs living in the major cities were aware of government support that was available to them. This was possibly due to the fact that 33% of the

women who had established businesses lacked both formal education as well as previous business experience.

Jamali (2009) found that similar constraints were encountered by female entrepreneurs in other developing countries. Problems such as work-family conflicts, difficulty in accessing finance/capital as well as entrepreneurial education were found to be the most common challenges among women entrepreneurs. This was especially true in the service and retail business sectors. Nziku (2016), in a study of Tanzania identified lack of training opportunities, legal and cultural constraints, along with having to carry out too many household chores as some of the major challenges facing women entrepreneurs. Such findings were also confirmed in a study of women entrepreneurs in a particular municipality in South Africa (Agholor *et al*, 2015).

To sum up, the extant literature highlights the many challenges and obstacles that women entrepreneurs in Africa and in other developing countries face. In order to set the context for this paper the authors highlight two: access to capital, and access to information.

2.1 Access to capital

In many developing countries women entrepreneurs face particular difficulties during the start-up and initial growth phase of their businesses. Banks tend to charge women higher interest rates due to their lack of fixed and variable assets for use as collateral. In some countries such as Tanzania, the only potential sources of capital available to women entrepreneurs are from their personal savings, extended family networks, community savings (or credit systems), or informal social network groups (Nziku, 2016). This has been well documented by other researchers who have conducted empirical studies on these aspects within other developing countries (Ramadani, 2009; 2013). These studies suggest that networks are very important to women entrepreneurs, not least because they provide a good source of financial capital for start-ups. Networks also enhance potential access to information about markets, customers, suppliers and creditors (Weiler and Bernasek, 2001; Bird and Brush, 2002). Nziku (2013) found that Tanzanian females were capable of creating their own networks, which were both unique and advantageous to them in the creation of sub-networks within the larger eco-system. These networks stem from high levels of empathy between members and their underlying support systems, (Weiler and Bernasek, 2001).

Halkais *et al* (2011) in a study of women entrepreneurs across three regions in Nigeria, discovered that among the many contextual factors that motivated women in their enterprises

were: access to microfinance; and family dynamics. The latter is related to kinship, which plays a significant role in African societies. Khavul *et al*, (2009), Khayesi and George (2011), Khayesi *et al* (2014), and Kiggundu, (2002) also confirm the role of family ties across a number of African countries, especially within rural communities. Brixiova and Kangoye (2016), in a study of women entrepreneurs in Swaziland confirmed that women tend to have lower levels of start-up capital and are more likely to fund their businesses from the informal sector rather than the formal sector compared with males. Similarly, in a study of female entrepreneurs in Malaysia, Mazlina and Punitha (2016), found support from family members and informal social networks were as important as internal motivation and creativity, especially in ensuring sustainability of enterprises.

2.2 Access to information

The availability of business information is important in the early stages of initiating a new business. Singh and Krishna (1994), in studies of entrepreneurship in India, suggest that a willingness to become involved in information seeking is a major entrepreneurial requirement. 'Information seeking' refers to the frequency of contact that an individual has with various sources of information, the result of which is often dependent on information accessibility, either through individual effort, or as part of social capital and networking (Greve and Salaff, 2003). Access to new information is indispensable for the initiation, survival and growth of businesses and this has been found in the African context, (Kristiansen, 2004; Mead, and Liedholm, 1998). Relevant business information is needed to engender a clear perception of an individual's ability to succeed in business. From these studies, access to information on: markets and sources of social and intellectual capital, technological solutions, design, government rules and regulations, were found to be the most important factors involved in starting up and growing a business .

To some extent this will also depend on other factors relating to the personal characteristics of an individual women entrepreneur such as; her level of education, initiative, and expertise and not just to external factors such as infrastructural aspects that determine access to information (for example, media coverage and telecommunication system, Kristiansen, (2004)). In these domains, women entrepreneurs often lag behind their male counterparts. In Tanzania, women were constrained by lack of education and training, low levels of business experience, discrimination, poor levels of socialisation (or networking), all of which can contribute to an

unwillingness to take risks (Nchimbi, 2002). It is in this context that social networks can play a vital role in stimulating entrepreneurship among women.

3. Role of social networks among women entrepreneurs

Networking is described as a set of interrelated relationships with a mutual benefit to all involved, through the sharing and giving of information and data, resources and personal referrals. This makes it possible to leverage additional capital once the initial capital has been raised. The entrepreneurship literature often refers to such forms of capital as: social capital, institutional capital, or network capital (Greve and Salaff, 2003; Johannisson and Monsted, 1997).

A social network consists of a series of formal and informal ties between the central actor and other actors in a circle of connections, and represents channels through which entrepreneurs gain access to the necessary resources for business start-up, growth and success (Kristiansen, 2004; Birley, 1985). In a study of Tanzanian businesses within small-scale garment and carpentry industries, Kristiansen *et al* (2005) found that social networks had significant impact on business adaptability. Nziku (2012, 2013) also suggests that, apart from the significant impact on business adaptabilities, social networks have a strong impact in influencing the entrepreneurial start-up of businesses for the majority of women entrepreneurs.

Drakopoulou Dodd, (2012) classifies networks into three different types. Firstly, personal networks are those which develop from contacts between people based on either family or sympathy (friends and contacts), mutual support and exchange of information. Such networks are typically based on social support which is characterised by high levels of closeness and trust. Secondly, instrumental networks are based on instrumental relations such as supply and sales contacts and public relations. Thirdly, symbolic networks are a typology based on members having common aims or attitudes towards a specific goal; for example, religious, political, ethnic, mentor and moral. Symbolic networks can evolve over time and then become a type of mutual insurance.

Meanwhile social capital is an economic construct that refers to the connections between individuals and entities that can be economically valuable. Social capital is based on social networks that include people who trust and assist each other and this trust is itself a powerful asset. The focus of research on social capital relates to issues such as: governance, trust, family and business identity, communication, family councils, and work-family balance.

Portes, (2000) defines social capital as the capability of securing resources or benefits from social networks or other social structures. It also encapsulates the ways in which women entrepreneurs, especially in developing countries, need to make the most of using advisors/business mentors and continuing education in order to build and embed social capital. In this context, the use of networks has been proven by many researchers to be central in the starting-up of a business, as well as for growing and developing businesses. Pivotal to such networks, is the role of trust which goes hand in hand with the practical support needed for starting-up new businesses (Amoako and Matlay, 2015).

Several studies confirm that networks within African communities are essential ingredients for the survival of small businesses. Women entrepreneurs tend to use their networks in very different ways from their male counterparts. This applies to not only starting a new business, but also expanding and developing it (Khaseyi *et al*, 2014). In a case study of Kenyan women entrepreneurs, Kyalo and Kiganane (2014) found that the building of social networks for women entrepreneurs in order to develop their self-confidence was as important as access to finance. The most common measure of social capital used in such studies tends to be the number of formal and informal networks an entrepreneur has. This encompasses the number of people involved in those networks as well as access to resources the network provides, (Cattell, 2001)

4. The 'strength of weak ties'

Granovetter (1973, 1983) considers acquaintances (weak ties) as those individuals who have less social interaction with each other compared with close friends (strong ties). In Figure 1 below this is depicted as relationships between individuals and their acquaintances who form a 'low-density network'. In the diagram this occurs when many of the possible lines of contact ('relational lines') are missing. By contrast, when the network is formed between an individual and his/her close friends, they will tend to be 'densely knit'. Many of the possible lines of contact are in evidence in Figure 1. The self-esteem or individuality of the person is central. An individual with self-esteem will be able to bring together close friends who are often in touch with each other. They are then able to create a tightly woven social structure. The network can be expanded further because these close friends will have other acquaintances who can also join the network. Therefore, the social structure which arises from the complete chain will be very different from the original social structure which the individual with self-esteem started with.

Granovetter (1973, 1983) noted that within certain social structures acquaintances never become inconsequential ties. Rather they become an important ‘bridge’ between the individual with self-esteem (the network initiator) and his or her close friends. Blau (1974) noted that close friends are more likely to move in different circles than those of just acquaintances. Such close friends are more likely to overlap with contacts that the individual with self-esteem already has. Moreover, the information that the additional individual has is likely to be similar to that of the original self-esteemed individual. In other words, the networks among close friends might be self-limiting. They may involve just similar or homogenous groups of people and may even become ‘cliques’

Insert Figure 1: Here

- Here, the A-B edge is not the only path that connects its two end points. Though they may not realize it, A and B are also connected by a longer path through F, G, and H.

From Figure 1 above, each edge of the social network labelled as strong tie (S) or weak tie (W) reflects the strength of the relationship. The local bridges, especially those with reasonably large spans, can play almost the same role that the main bridges do, though in a less direct way. They will provide their end points with access to parts of the network, and therefore sources of information that they would otherwise not be able to access. The ‘strength of weak ties’ , though it may seem counter-intuitive, stems from the possibility that weak ties become ‘bridges’ between heterogeneous individuals who then have the potential to expand the original network even further.

Due to poverty and the need to provide for children, women entrepreneurs in many developing countries need to embed themselves into quite unique, often bespoke, social networks. While much is known about women entrepreneurs in developed countries, less is known about their equivalents in developing countries. Compared to their male counterparts, women do not place as much emphasis on ‘strong-ties networks’ which can have an impact on their fledgling businesses when they seek out loans from banks (Carter *et al*, 2003). Essers and Benschop (2009), found that women tend to form strong relationships that concentrate on personal and symbolic networks as opposed to institutional networks. This can hinder them when trying to obtain business support, either financial or non-financial.

Such networks are typically characterised by emotional intensity, mutual confiding and intimacy (Carter *et al*, 2003). A possible handicap arising from this is the undue pressure that

family members may have on the success of their businesses. This can be due to the impact of kin ties, which in themselves are less likely to provide financial resources, or informational advantages compared to those arising from non-kin ties. Moore and Buttner, (1997), and Carter *et al.*, (2003) have suggested that weak-tie networks disadvantage women entrepreneurs when they seek the support of banks because many banks often may not even know the (potential) women entrepreneur personally. This can seriously impair women's loan applications.

4.1 The impact of weak ties

Apart from the potential for weak ties to link different social groups, another benefit of weak ties is an increase in specialisation and interdependency (Blau, 1980; Jack 2005). Although the bridging role created by weak ties might not be immediately discernible, Granovetter (1973, 1983) suggested that social systems lacking in weak ties can become fragmented, disjointed and incoherent. Innovations and new ideas will tend to be diffused slowly because groups that are differentiated by race, ethnicity or geography (or in our study gender) will not have the same access to information. Rather, the diffusion and spread of innovations or new ideas is facilitated by small cohesive groups who despite sharing a "culture" are not so tightly woven that they block non-members from benefiting. It could be assumed that weak ties social networking would be more prevalent among lower socio-economic groups. Yet, Ericksen and Yancey (1977, 1980) found that less well educated (and poorer) individuals were more likely to use strong ties than educated individuals especially within the labour market in their search for job opportunities. This is due to the fact, as shown in the research of Nziku (2012, 2016) in the context of sub-Saharan Africa, that the more educated is the individual, the less entrepreneurial he/she tends to be. In fact, the majority of entrepreneurs have lower levels of formal education.

Whether individuals are part of weak ties or strong ties networks, the main purpose in using these ties is to provide a minimum level of economic security for their members (Ericksen and Yancey, 1977, 1980). In the context of this paper, such ties are similar to the channels through which kinship and family enhance economic security within developing African countries, not least because of their inherent reciprocity. Nonetheless, the pervasive use of weak ties by the poor is often a response to economic pressures and insecurity (Marlow, 2006). They believe themselves to be without alternatives, and they may depend too much on the adaptive nature of these reciprocity networks.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

The above discussion is not to deny that strong ties are useful in terms of information flows. As Granovetter (1983, p218), argues...’the speed of flow, credibility, and especially influence are all greater through strong ties...’and...’most of the influence is carried through strong ties...’ (Wellman, 1980, p12). Moreover, according to Wellman (1980),though weak ties create the bridges over which new innovations and new ideas can overcome the barriers of social groups, the decision making process will still tend to be influenced predominantly by the strong-ties networks within groups.

4.2 Weak and strong ties in relation to gender

The literature suggests that men are often better at establishing and maintaining professional relations across several (usually other male) networks, both formally and informally. This applies particularly in relation to access to financial institutions and funding generally (Carter *et al*, 2003). In contrast, Moore and Buttner (1997), point out that although there can be many effective women networks, due to the fact that there are few female leaders or business starters especially in developing countries, their networks are often less conspicuous.

Normative constraints and societal attitudes, arising perhaps from cultural or religious beliefs, are sometimes not conducive towards women even being employed or becoming entrepreneurs (Jamali, 2009). Few women are able to base their working lives on networks as much as men can, which keeps them in a disadvantaged position in terms of back up and support, especially at the start-up stage (Carter *et al*, 2003; Carter *et al*, 2007). For example, in the case of Tanzania the majority of women entrepreneurs were found to be less successful in accessing the assistance offered by corporate or governmental institutions responsible for encouraging small business development (Nziku, 2013; Nchimbi, 2002).

This study will now embed this ‘strength of weak ties’ concept within a well-known economics framework which places attitudes towards risk, incentives, and issues of performance and reward at its core: the Principal-Agent framework. In this study the ‘strength of weak ties’ may not only provide a social network for women entrepreneurs in Africa with relevant and useful new information. The existence of these strengths may also mitigate against some of the Principal-Agent problems identified below.

5. Embedding ‘strength of weak ties’ networks within a Principal-Agent framework: a possible taxonomy

The Principal-Agent (henceforth P-A) paradigm has a long pedigree in economic analysis with different applications across many different contexts. Originally applied to contract theory, especially labour contracts, the P-A problem relates to the possibility that within any business, structure or organisation, there can be a conflict of interests (objectives) between the Principal (for example, the owner of a business) and the Agent (the manager of the business). Jensen and Meckling (1976) were perhaps the first to set out a formal theory of the P-A paradigm and it has since been applied in many different contexts including labour markets, banking, and

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

industrial economics. There are five main dimensions to this paradigm and from these dimensions the authors identify six measurable indicators to enable the design of the taxonomy.

The first dimension is the monitoring and verification problem. This will depend on the type of contract in force, ie; whether it is a behaviour-type contract which tends to be non-specific, generic and targets-free, or a targets (outcomes) based contract. The type of contract will determine the extent of monitoring or verification required and who actually carries out the monitoring. Such monitoring and verification is required because behaviour-based contracts may lead to opportunistic behaviour on the part of agents. Task measurability is much easier when contracts are targets or outcomes based. Such contracts also tend to reduce the agent's level of risk-aversion. In the standard P-A paradigm, monitoring and verifying is aimed at reducing the risk of agents engaging in shirking or 'satisficing' behaviour. It is also designed to reduce excessive rent seeking behaviour.

The second dimension is the asymmetric information problem and the need to minimise moral hazard and adverse selection effects. These effects stem from the potential that may exist for goal conflict (or incentives misalignment) within a contract. The third dimension is the tendency for agents to engage in excessive risk aversion beyond what is considered to be normal, reasonable, and necessary. The fourth dimension is the scope to develop incentives to engage in risk-sharing. This is often a function of the ownership and property rights within a contract. These aspects will be dependent on the type of business. For example, social businesses will be different in this regard from private businesses. Finally, the fifth dimension is the risk- within a P-A framework- for actors to conceal their true intentions from each other. This, in turn, is related to the issue of trust within an economic context. Once again, the creation of appropriate networks to maximise trust can play a crucial role.

We summarise these five dimensions of the P-A paradigm in Table 1. The Table contains an innovative taxonomy of possible outcomes using the six measurable indicators. This taxonomy (or scorecard) sets out potential differences between male and female entrepreneurs in terms of the trade-offs they face when establishing and developing their businesses. The key question to be addressed in this study is whether the 'strength of weak ties', when applied to women entrepreneurs, can lead to greater mitigation of these underlying P-A trade-offs, compared with male entrepreneurs. The existing literature covering different types of networks in which women entrepreneurs are involved confirms this anyway.ⁱⁱ At this stage of the research, the

conclusions reached will be purely conceptual, though the authors intend to apply the taxonomy in a future empirical study of African women entrepreneurs

Insert Table 1 : Here

The above taxonomy may serve as a useful research framework to more fully understand the different ways in which women use their networks compared with men. The taxonomy may also assist researchers to analyse the barriers that women entrepreneurs face in a more systematic and measurable way in terms of the trade-offs that lie at the heart of Principal-Agent paradigm. The authors plan to test this taxonomy empirically in a future study using an experimental/behavioural economics approach focusing on aspects such as: prospect theory, framing and loss aversion.ⁱⁱⁱ The future study will be based on field work in three African countries.

Indicator 1: Attitudes towards risk

There is some evidence from the empirical literature that gender differences exist with regard to attitudes towards risk. Studies by Kamal *et al* (2009) in relation to women entrepreneurs in the UAE, and Nziku (2012) on Tanzania, suggest that women are generally more risk-averse than men and also have lower personal interest compared with men. The OECD (2016), in a major study of the gender gap and entrepreneurial risk across 38 countries (South Africa being the only Sub-Saharan African country in the sample) reached the same conclusion. A different conclusion is reached by Humbert and Brindley (2015) in a study of Irish women business owners. They challenge the conventional view that women are more risk-averse than males, particularly if the definition of risk is extended beyond the financial domain. Other contributory factors were: socio-economic position, locational and cultural aspects. Tagg and Wilson (2012) also challenge the traditional view that women are so different in their approach to business compared with men. Whatever position is correct, the question is whether this means that women are more or less likely to be entrepreneurial compared with men. This ultimately is an empirical matter which will be analysed in the future paper.

Indicator 2: Contracts: behaviour-based or targets (output) based

This is a crucial aspect of P-A theory, in which one might expect there to be differences between men and women. According to Essers, and Benschop (2009) in a study of women entrepreneurs of Moroccan and Tunisian origin in the Netherlands, women prefer behaviour-based contracts to targets based contracts (Carter, *et al* 2003). This preference may be based on

a reliance on weak ties social networks rather than strong-tie networks, As previously highlighted, the former may be traced to an over-reliance on networks that are personal or symbolic, rather than instrumental (Nziku and Struthers, 2016).

Indicator 3: Potential for goal conflict (asymmetric information)

This issue lies at the heart of the P-A framework and relates to the key concepts of moral hazard and adverse selection (Akerlof, 1970; Spence, 1973; Stigler, 1961; and Stiglitz, 1983).It is difficult to argue intuitively that there will be intrinsic differences between men and women on this aspect. However, it can be argued that within the domain of social business, in which women tend to be heavily engaged especially in African countries, the asymmetric information problem may be less pronounced (Struthers, 2011).The reason why social businesses may have lower asymmetric information problems is because, on the whole, participants in such businesses tend to have common goals, or at the very least, common aspirations. This also needs to be tested empirically.

Indicator 4: Risk-sharing

On the aspect of risk-sharing there appear to be clear differences in terms of gender. Within developing countries there is evidence that women entrepreneurs prefer to combine and share risks (and rewards) in their entrepreneurial activities (Yunus, 2010, 2011).Why this should be the case is an issue of some import. Are women entrepreneurs more inclined to prefer risk-sharing in their business activities, not through choice, but out of necessity (Humburt and Brindley, 2015)? Are there cultural reasons why women prefer a risk-sharing approach? Do institutional factors in some societies contribute to a more risk-sharing approach?^{iv} Do women avoid competition while men embrace competition, as argued by Niederle and Vesterlund, (2007)?For men, the preference is to operate in more formal (strong ties) networks. Whereas for women, the preference is for informal networks (weak ties). In such networks, risk-sharing and risk-pooling are more prevalent (Cetin *et al*, 2016; Khayesi *et al*, 2014; Drakopoulou Dodd, 2012; Bardasi and Sabarwal, 2009; Weiler and Bernasek, 2001; Blau, 1974, 1980).

Indicator 5: Transaction costs

Transaction costs is an aspect where the authors expect to identify clear gender differences. Panzar and Willig, (1977, 1981) have argued that men enjoy major advantages when it comes to minimising transactions costs. These costs include: brokers fees, loan terms, and other fees such as the legal costs involved in the setting up and expanding of businesses. Not only do men

1
2
3 enjoy economies of scale and (scope) related to size, and prior experience. They also benefit
4 from the potential for joint products and the bundling of business activities, compared with
5 women, all of which reduces transactions costs. Due to the higher value of their initial assets,
6 they are more able to secure preferential loan terms compared with women, Nziku (2012,
7 2013) found this was the case in her study of women entrepreneurs in Tanzania. That said, how
8 do women entrepreneurs build up that success in the first place, apart from niche or gender-
9 bespoke areas of entrepreneurial activity (Halkias *et al*, 2011; Bruhn *et al*, 2010; Bardasi, and
10 Sabarwal, 2009; Jack, 2005)? This issue is related to the scalability of businesses which is an
11 aspect of some relevance to women entrepreneurs in an African context.^v

12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 **Indicator 6: Verification and monitoring costs**

20
21 This is concerned with the types of contracts already discussed above. Since men have a
22 preference for targets (or output) based contracts compared with women, this makes for easier
23 and less expensive verification and monitoring costs on the part of those agencies who will be
24 providing credit to their businesses (Baumol, 1982; Baumol *et al*, 1982) This not only impacts
25 on the likelihood of women getting access to credit in the first place. It can also impact
26 negatively on their ability to secure new or repeat loans that are vital for ensuring growth and
27 expansion of their businesses. The literature suggests that length of initial contract, renewal
28 terms, and the formality associated with a targets based approach to contracts, will reduce the
29 verification and monitoring costs in providing credit facilities for business start-ups initiated by
30 men compared to those established by women (Jamali, 2009; Carter *et al*, 2003; Baumol, 1982,
31 Baumol *et al*, 1982)

32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 **6. The ‘strength of weak ties’ networks in mitigating Principal Agent problems**

42
43 In this section the authors summarise the key implications of the taxonomy outlined in Table
44 1. In doing so the aim is to produce a scorecard to compare the outcomes for male and female
45 entrepreneurs in terms of the six main P-A indicators highlighted in Section 5. The main
46 contention in this study is that women entrepreneurs, especially in Africa, face certain barriers
47 that are not usually encountered by male entrepreneurs (see Section 2). The insights offered by
48 presenting the obstacles faced by African women entrepreneurs in the context of the P-A
49 paradigm are outlined in Table 1. When combined with ‘strength of weak ties’ networks within
50 a P-A framework this leads to several tentative conclusions.

Following Granovetter, (1973, 1983) we suggest that women entrepreneurs may after all benefit from their use of such networks in terms of mitigating some of the P-A trade-offs. As far as the first P-A indicator is concerned (attitudes towards risk), male entrepreneurs will tend to have the upper hand. This is supported by the extant literature, as reported in Table 1. Similarly when it comes to Indicator 2 (contract types), men tend to score better than women. However, the role of ‘strength of weak ties’ may play a part here. This is because if it is true that weak ties actually manifest strength, this may offset the apparent disadvantages facing women entrepreneurs. This is possible due to the potential that exists in weak ties networks to create more bridging relationships, as seen in Figure 1.

In essence, although behaviour based contracts may superficially appear to be less satisfactory in terms of mitigating P-A problems, compared with targets based contracts, this may not be the case when we consider the potential extent and reach of the networks that can be achieved through these bridging effects. There may be greater scope to enhance the effectiveness of the wide range of business relationships that can develop through these weak ties than might initially be assumed. Similarly in terms of Indicator 3 (potential for goal conflict), because women tend to value social impact more in their businesses compared with men, a priori they can be expected to be less affected by goal conflict (incentives-misalignment), moral hazard or adverse selection effects.^{vi}

In relation to the three other P-A indicators from our taxonomy, the message is more mixed. Theory and empirical evidence suggest that women are more open to risk-sharing than men (Indicator 4). The experience of the Grameen Bank model developed in Bangladesh, and which assisted many women in that country to become entrepreneurs, exemplifies this point. (Yunus, 2010, 2011).^{vii} However, a word of caution is appropriate here. Whilst risk-sharing is obviously good for raising extra capital, the very need for such risk-sharing on the part of women entrepreneurs may arise from the inherent obstacles that they face in terms of raising finance, especially at the developmental stages of their businesses. Certainly in the context of social businesses, risk-sharing can be highly beneficial. However, to counter this, once the disadvantages that women entrepreneurs face in terms of Indicator 5 (transaction costs) are considered, the benefits from risk-sharing may be greatly outweighed by these costs. The future empirical analysis using the Principal-Agent taxonomy developed in this study will quantify these trade-offs.

Finally in terms of Indicator 6 (verification and monitoring costs), it appears that women entrepreneurs may be at a disadvantage compared with their male counterparts. This is partly linked again to the types of contracts favoured by women which can lead to higher verification and monitoring costs. It is also due to the fact that male entrepreneurs will usually have strong track records of setting up and operating successful businesses which in itself may lead to lower verification and monitoring costs. In terms of whether weak ties networks can be expected to minimise these costs, intuitively it could be argued that the opposite is more likely. This is because of the potential for additional links in the network chain- which stems from the extra bridges created in such networks- to lead to higher incremental verification and monitoring costs.

The main aim of the next paper will be to calibrate these six possible trade-offs using the P-A taxonomy developed in this conceptual study. This will enable the authors to embed the 'strength of weak ties' concept within the taxonomy and ascertain whether, as suggested in the present study, the 'strength of weak ties' may be advantageous for women entrepreneurs, at least in terms of some of the P-A indicators. At a conceptual level, it is possible to suggest how the various trade-offs within the taxonomy could be manifested. The empirical paper will measure the effects and highlight possible outcomes. The channels through which this might occur are discussed in the next section.

7. Future research, policy implications and conclusions

The next stage of the research will involve empirical work on women entrepreneurship in selected African countries. The aim will be to examine whether the 'strength of weak ties' concept can help to mitigate at least some of the P-A problems identified in the taxonomy. To this end, the design of the empirical tools (questionnaires and interviews) that will be used to elicit responses from a sample of women entrepreneurs, will be based on a methodological framework derived from experimental/behavioural economics. The pioneering work of Kahneman and Tversky (1979), which adopted a completely new approach to decision making under uncertainty from the traditional expected utility approach, will be used. This 'new' approach with its emphasis on concepts such as, prospect theory, framing, and loss aversion, will determine the design of the empirical approach including the types of questions asked to respondents in the sample.

Some of the possible questions to be asked in the empirical paper are: Do women entrepreneurs engage in loss-aversion rather than risk-aversion in their business activities? When 'framing'

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

alternative outcomes, do women entrepreneurs face different ‘binding constraints’ (boundary conditions) compared with male entrepreneurs (for example, a higher level of guaranteed return on the initial investment)? What role does ‘prospecting’ play among women entrepreneurs compared with male entrepreneurs?

In a recent study of entrepreneurship among households in rural Kenya, George *et al* (2015) adopted a similar methodology. That study had a different objective to the present study, since it was concerned with examining how individuals (men and women) respond to breakdown in social structure and imminent poverty in terms of their entrepreneurial decision making. However, the research used the key argument of prospect theory which states that decisions by individuals to undertake risky entrepreneurial ventures will be based not just on expected return (as in expected utility theory). It will also be based on where they might end up in the event of failure, compared to a given or predetermined reference point. More technically, the potential entrepreneur will compare a ‘likely loss’ against a ‘potential gain’. These opposing outcomes are not symmetrical but asymmetrical. The individual’s decision to undertake a risky investment will be based on ‘loss aversion’ not ‘risk aversion’. The future empirical study, which will follow the present paper will test whether this is more applicable for women than male entrepreneurs.

In the somewhat extreme scenario of the study by George *et al* (2015), the individual investor has to weigh up ‘affordable loss against ‘reasonable gain’. This is ‘framed’ in the context of investors who might ‘plunge’ into risky investments, often out of desperation (Dew *et al*, 2009; Sarasvathy, 2001. Though the future empirical study will not be based on such an extreme scenario, the aim will be to ascertain whether these concepts of ‘affordable loss’ and ‘reasonable gain’ have a strong gender element among entrepreneurs within an African context. For example, do male and women entrepreneurs operate at different survival or ‘acceptable thresholds’ when making their business decisions? By using this methodology, can it be concluded, as suggested in this paper from a conceptual perspective, that a key insight of the ‘strength of weak ties’ concept is that it can help to mitigate some of the Principal-Agent trade-offs identified in our taxonomy, and which are ubiquitous in all contracts?

In this paper the authors have been concerned with developing a conceptual framework (taxonomy) using the Principal-Agent paradigm in order to facilitate better understanding of the obstacles that women entrepreneurs face, particularly within African countries. However, even at this stage of the research some useful policy implications emerge. One implication is

the need to develop appropriate forums or networks that will enable women entrepreneurs to be able to

benefit from the expertise that already exists within women entrepreneurship initiatives around the world (Gibb, 1993).

Some examples highlight the benefits of such networks which already operate in practice. Firstly, there is UNCTAD's EMPRETEC network which for a number of years has been operating in more than 30 countries and has a proven track record in stimulating women's entrepreneurship, especially in African countries. There is also the long-established Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) which originated from Babson College in the US. Though the numbers can vary from year to year, a growing number of African countries have been included in this important barometer of entrepreneurial activity around the world.

Within these networks, women entrepreneurs play an increasingly vital role though more work is required to ensure that this expands. Furthermore, within individual developing countries, including many in Africa, governments have been prioritising this aspect of their economic development process, not least because improving the level of female entrepreneurship is one of the key objectives to help these countries to meet the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The challenge is to harness these international and national efforts to ensure the spread of best practice around the world. This is desirable for its own sake. It is also desirable from a human capital and economic growth perspective, given the vital roles that women play in all aspects of the modern economy (Smith-Hunter, 2006). This is especially true of women in African countries who often face particular obstacles for a variety of cultural, historical or societal reasons. Public policy, whether at the national, international, or at the supranational level, should be geared to addressing these issues through training and mentoring as well as other capacity building activities.

Policy measures that enable emerging entrepreneurs to acquire skills, access resources and be able to penetrate markets can have a strongly positive impact on the ability of entrepreneurs to learn the necessary business practices in their country. In so doing, over time they will be able to start-up, develop and expand their businesses. A related issue is the need for such policies to narrow the wide disparities in the level of entrepreneurial activity among different communities within the same country. Such disparities might be geographical, regional and even ethnic and are not just based on gender. According to the ILO (2008), these disparities are manifested in the many different challenges that potential entrepreneurs face in accessing resources, skills,

markets, information and business networks, all of which are vital to the formation and growth of new businesses.

In terms of the present paper, the authors contend that there may be circumstances in which the ‘strength of weak ties’ may mitigate some of the problems embedded within the Principal-Agent paradigm. This can be advantageous to women entrepreneurs in Africa. Viewed through the lens of our taxonomy this is likely, though perhaps not in all of the P-A parameters identified in the paper. The policy implications of this insight will also be highlighted in the future paper. To the extent that ‘strength of weak ties’ networks can mitigate some of the Principal-Agent problems identified in the taxonomy, this can be expected to influence public policy particularly within those African countries that have prioritised women entrepreneurship. This might be best achieved through active government promotion of those social networks that benefit from the ‘strength of weak ties’.

Endnotes

ⁱThese differences between the motivations of male entrepreneurs compared with female entrepreneurs have also been reported in studies of European countries. For example, Cetin *et al* (2016) in a large study across 27 European counties using the European and World Values Surveys, discovered that social capital that arose from formal networks tended to be the domain of men; while social capital that stemmed from informal networks (for example, strong interpersonal contacts) tended to be the dominant factor for women entrepreneurs.

ⁱⁱSee Dzisi (2008, 2012) for studies of the role of these networks in relation to women entrepreneurs in Ghana.

ⁱⁱⁱThis experimental/behavioural economics methodology will inform the questionnaire/interview based quantitative study the authors will carry out.

^{iv}The institutional dimension to this topic has a strong pedigree within the economics literature. Since the early work of North (1990), there has been a vast amount of theoretical and empirical work focusing on the institutional dimension of economic decision making. The main conclusion from this literature is that no form of economic decision making can be fully understood or analysed in an institutional vacuum. This study incorporates these ‘institutional’ aspects which can be expected to determine the reasons why women may need to use social networks based on weak ties. Such social networks are the types of networks that women entrepreneurs tend to inhabit, especially in an African context.

^vEconomies of scope relate to the potential of businesses and organisations to achieve greater efficiency by combining related activities rather than separating them (Baumol *et al*, 1982; Panzar and Willig, 1981). This concept applies particularly in production; for example, joint products. Technically it refers to a situation where: cost of activity a plus activity b < cost of activity a and cost of activity b separately. How is this relevant to businesses established by women? For example, it may be possible to benefit from specialised labour, technology and even knowledge and information which have already been used in one activity but is now being used in a different (though related) activity. The combined costs of doing so may be lower 'proportionately' compared to carrying out the activities separately. Similarly, when a company produces multi-products, say in one factory or plant, rather than being spread over several factories and plants. We can argue that networks formed by women, referred to in this paper as 'weak ties', may also facilitate the achievement of significant economies of scope due to the 'bridging effects' of such weak ties. The 'exploitation' of these economies of scope, through the use of weak ties social networks, may also ensure better scalability (and sustainability) of the businesses that result from these processes.

^{vi}Of course, there is also a danger that networks based on weak ties might become too diffused and lacking in focus which is an important caveat to make.

^{vii}The pooling and sharing of risks lies at the very core of the Grameen Bank model and is one reason why women entrepreneurs were major beneficiaries of the model across a large number of developing countries, including some in Africa (Yunus, 2010, 2011).

References

- Agholor, E.D, Smith, W. S, Oyelana, A. A. and Ibrahim, S.I. (2015) "Challenges faced by women entrepreneurs and strategies adopted by women entrepreneurs to ensure small business success in Nkonkobe Municipality, South Africa". *Journal of Economics*, Vol 6 No 1, pp 37-49.
- Akerlof, G. A. (1970) "The market for lemons: quality uncertainty and the market mechanism" *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol 84 No3, pp 488-500.
- Amine, L. S. and Staub, K. M. (2009) "Women entrepreneurs in Sub-Saharan Africa: an institutional theory analysis from a social marketing point of view." *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development* Vol 21 No 2, pp183-211.
- Amoako, I. O. and Matlay, H. (2015) "Norms and trust-shaping relationships among food exporting SMEs in Ghana" *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, Vol 16 No 2, pp123-124.
- Bardasi, E. and Sabarwal, S. (2009) "Gender, access to finance, and entrepreneurial performance in Sub-Saharan Africa." *World Bank Mimeo*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- Baumol, W. J. (1982) "Contestable markets: an uprising in the theory of industrial structure" *American Economic Review*, Vol 72 No1, pp1-15.
- Baumol, W. J. Panzar, J. C, and Willig, R. J. (1982) *Contestable markets and industry structure*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York.
- Bird, B. and Brush, C. (2002) "A gendered perspective on organizational creation." *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol 26 No 3, pp41-65.
- Birley, S. (1985) "The role of networks in the entrepreneurial process" *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol 1 No1, pp 107-117.
- Blau, P. (1980) "When weak ties are structured" *Unpublished manuscript*, Department of Sociology, State University of New York, Albany.
- Blau, P. (1974) "Parameters of social structure" *American Sociological Review*, Vol 39 No 5, pp615-635.
- Brixiová, Z. and Kangoye, T. (2016) "Gender and constraints to entrepreneurship in Africa: new evidence from Swaziland", *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*, No5, pp1-8.
- Bruhn, M. Karlan, D. and Schoar, A. (2010) "What capital is missing in developing countries?" *American Economic Review: Papers and Proceedings* Vol 100 No2, pp 629-33.

- Brush, C. Carter, N. M. Gatewood, E. J. Green, P. D. and Hart, M. M. (2006) *"Growth Oriented Women Entrepreneurs and their Businesses"* Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar.
- Brush, C. Bruin, A. Gatewood, E. J. Henry, C. (2010) *Women Entrepreneurs and the Global Environment for Growth*, Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA, Edward Elgar.
- Carter, S., Marlow, S. and Butler, J (ed). (2003) "Accounting for change: professionalism as a challenge to gender disadvantage in entrepreneurship", in *New Perspectives on Women Entrepreneurs*, Greenwich Publishers, London.
- Carter, S. Shaw, E. Lam, W and Wilson, F. (2007) "Gender, entrepreneurship and bank lending: the criteria and processes used by bank loan officers in assessing applications" *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol 31 No 3, pp 427-444.
- Cattell, V (2001). "Poor people, poor places, and poor health: the mediating role of social networks and social capital" *Social Science and Medicine*, Vol52 No10, pp1501-1516.
- Cetin, D, Fernandez-Zubieta, A, Mulatero, F. (2016) "Formal and informal social capital as determinants of male and female entrepreneurship in Europe", *Cankiri Karatekin Universitesi, Journal of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, Vol 6, No 1, pp 723-748.
- Davidson, M.J. Burke, R.J. (2004) *Women in Management World Wide*. Aldershot, UK. Ashgate.
- Dew, N. Sarasathy, S. Read, S. and Wiltbank, R. (2009) "Affordable loss: behavioural economic aspects of the plunge decision" *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, Vol 3 No 2, pp 105-126.
- Diaz-Garcia, C. Brush, C. Gatewood, E. and Welte, F. (2016) *Women's Entrepreneurship: Global and Local Contexts*, Edward Elgar.
- Drakopoulou Dodd, S. (2012) "Network approaches and embeddedness" in Mole, K. and M. Ram (eds.), *Perspectives on Entrepreneurship: A Course Text*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dzisi, S. (2008) "Entrepreneurial activities of indigenous African women: a case study of Ghana", *Journal of Entrepreneurship Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*, Vol, 2 No3, pp 254-264.
- Dzisi, S. (2012) "The use of social capital and the success of women entrepreneurs in Ghana" *Journal of Social Business*, Vol 2 No1, pp59-79.
- Ericksen, E. and Yancey, W (1977) "The locus of strong ties," *unpublished manuscript*, Department of Sociology, Temple University.

- 1
2
3 Ericksen, E. and Yancey, W. (1980) "Class, sector and income determination", *unpublished*
4 *manuscript*, Department of Sociology, Temple University.
- 5
6 Essers, C. and Benschop, T (2009) "Enterprising identities: female entrepreneurs of Moroccan
7 and Tunisian origin in the Netherlands", *Organisation Studies*, Vol 28 No 1, pp 49-69.
- 8
9 George, G. Kotha, R. Parikh, P. Alnuaimi, T. Bahaj, A.S. (2015) "Social structure, reasonable
10 gain and entrepreneurship in Africa," *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol 37 No 6, pp 1118-
11 1131.
- 12
13
14 Gibb, A. A. (1993) "The enterprise culture and education: understanding enterprise and its
15 links with small business, entrepreneurship and wider educational goals" *International Small*
16 *Business Journal*, Vol 11 No 3, pp 3-32.
- 17
18 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor. (2017) "Global Report 2016/17", *Global Entrepreneurship*
19 *Research Association (GERA)*.
- 20
21 Granovetter, M. S. (1973) "The strength of weak ties" *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol 78
22 No 6, pp 1360-1380.
- 23
24 Granovetter, M. S. (1983) "The strength of weak ties: a network theory revisited", *Sociological*
25 *Theory*, Vol 1 No 2, pp 201-233
- 26
27 Greve, A. and Salaff, J. (2003) "Social networks and entrepreneurship", *Entrepreneurship:*
28 *Theory and Practice*, Vol 28 No 1, pp 1-23.
- 29
30 Halkias, D. Nwajiuba, C. Harkiolakis, N. and Carcatsanis, S.M. (2011) "Challenges facing
31 women entrepreneurs in Nigeria," *Management Research Review*, Vol 34, No 2, pp 221-235.
- 32
33 Hoang, H. and Antoncic, B. (2003) "Network-based research in entrepreneurship: a critical
34 review" *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol 18 No 2, pp 165-187.
- 35
36 Humbert, A.L. and Brindley, C. (2015) "Challenging the concept of risk in relation to
37 women's entrepreneurship", *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, Vol 30, No 1,
38 pp 2-25
- 39
40 ILO. (2008) "ILO strategy on promoting women's entrepreneurship development",
41 *International Labour Office (ILO)*, Geneva, March.
- 42
43 Jack, S. (2005) "The role, use and activation of strong and weak ties: a qualitative analysis"
44 *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol 42 No 6, pp 1233-1259.
- 45
46 Jamali, D. (2009) "Constraints and opportunities facing women entrepreneurs in developing
47 countries: a relational approach" *Gender in Management: an International Journal*, Vol 24 No
48 4, pp 232-251
- 49
50 Jensen, M. C. and Meckling, W. H. (1976) "Theory of the firm: managerial behaviour, agency
51 costs and ownership structure" *Journal of Financial Economics*, Vol 3 No 4, pp 305-360.
- 52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

- Johannisson, B. and Mønsted, M. (1997) "Contextualizing entrepreneurial networking", *International Journal of Management and Organization*, Vol 27 No3, pp109-137.
- Kahneman, D. and Tversky, A. (1979) "Prospect theory: an analysis of decisions under risk" *Econometrica*, Vol47 No2, pp263-291.
- Kamal, N. Wojoud, R. and Rana, N. (2009) "Factors that affect women entrepreneurs: evidence from an emerging economy" *International Journal of Organisational Analysis*, Vol 17 No3, pp 225-247.
- Khavul, S, Bruton, G. D, and Wood, E. (2009) "Informal family business in Africa", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol 33 No 6, pp 1219-1238
- Khayesi, J. and George, G. (2011) "When does the socio-economic context matter? Communal orientation and entrepreneurs' resource accumulation in Africa", *Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology*, Vol 84 No 3, pp 471-492.
- Khayesi, J, George, G, and Antonakis, J. (2014) "Kinship in entrepreneur networks: performance effects of resource assembly in Africa" *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol 38 No 6, pp1323-1342.
- Kiggundu, M.N. (2002) "Entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship in Africa: what is known and what needs to be done", *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, Vol 7 No 3, pp 239-258.
- Kristiansen, S. (2004) "Social networks and business success: the role of sub-cultures in an African context." *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol63 No5, pp 1149-1171.
- Kristiansen, S. Kimene, J. Mbwambo, A. and Wahid, F. (2005) "Information flows and adaptation in Tanzanian cottage industries" *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, Vol 7 No5, pp365-385.
- Kyalo, T.N. and Kiganane, L. M. (2014) "Challenges facing women entrepreneurs in Africa: a case of Kenyan women entrepreneurs". *International Journal of Advances in Management, Economics and Entrepreneurship*. Vol 1 No 2, pp 1-8.
- Marlow, S. (2006) "A safety net or ties that bind? Women, welfare and self-employment" *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, Vol 26 No 9/10, pp 397-410.
- Mazlina, M. and Punitha, A.P.S. (2016) "Challenges and success factors of female entrepreneurs: evidence from a developing country", *International Review of Management and Marketing*, Vol 6 Special Issue (S4), pp 224-231.
- Mead, D. M. and Liedholm, C. (1998) "The dynamics of micro and small enterprises in developing countries" *World Development*, Vol 26 No 1, pp61-74.

Minniti, M. and Naude, W. (2010) "What do we know about the patterns and determinants of female entrepreneurship across countries?" *European Journal of Development Research*, Vol 22 No 3, pp 277-293.

Moore, D. P. and Buttner, E. H. (1997) *Women entrepreneurs: moving beyond the glass ceiling*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Naude, W. and Havenga, J. J. D. (2005) "An overview of African entrepreneurship and small business research" *Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship*, Vol 18 No 1, pp 101-120.

Nchimbi, M. I. (2002) "Gender and entrepreneurship in Tanzania: a comparative analysis of male-female's start-up, motivation, individual characteristics and perceptions of business success", *PHD Thesis, University of Dar-es-Salaam*, Tanzania.

Niederle, M. and Vesterlund, L. (2007) "Do women shy away from competition? Do men compete too much?" *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol 122 No 3, pp 1067-101.

North, D. (1990) *Institutions, institutional change and economic performance*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Nziku, M. D. (2012) "Tanzanian education and entrepreneurial influence among females" *Journal of Women's Entrepreneurship and Education*, Vol 1 No 2, pp 52-73.

Nziku, M.D. (2013) "Tanzanian female entrepreneurs; strategies for sustainability and development", *PhD Thesis*, Southampton Solent University.

Nziku, M. D (2016) "Strategies and policies influencing entrepreneurship start-up decisions: evidence from Tanzania" in *Women's entrepreneurship in global and local contexts*, Diaz-Garcia, C., Brush, C.G., Gatewood, E.J and Welter, F. (eds), Edward Elgar.

Nziku, M. D. and Struthers, J. J. (2016) "Social capital and social business: the role of 'weak tie' networks among African female entrepreneurs", paper presented at *Multi-Year Expert Meeting on Investment. Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Productive Capacity-Building and Sustainable Development*, UNCTAD, Geneva, 16-17 March, 2016.

OECD. (2016) "Entrepreneurship at a Glance", *OECD*, Paris.

Panzar, J. C. and Willig, R. D (1977) "Economies of scale in multi-output production", *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol 91 No 3, pp481-493.

Panzar, J. C. and Willig, R. D. (1981) "Economies of Scope" *American Economic Review*, Vol 71 No 2, pp 268-272.

Portes, A. (2000) "The two meanings of social capital", *Sociological Review*, Vol 15 No 1, pp 1-12.

- Ramadani, V. (2009) "Business angels: who they really are", *Strategic Change*, Vol 18 No 7-8, pp 249-258.
- Ramadani, V. (2013) "Women entrepreneurship in the Republic of Macedonia: waiting for decisions" *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, Vol 19 No 1, pp 95-121.
- Richardson, P. Howarth, R. and Finnegan, G. (2004) "The challenges of growing small businesses: insights from women entrepreneurs in Africa" *International Labour Organization (ILO), SEED Working Paper, No 47, Geneva, Switzerland*.
- Sarasvathy, S. D. (2001) "Causation and effectuation: towards a theoretical shift from economic inevitability to entrepreneurial contingency," *Academy of Management Review*, Vol 26 No 2, pp 243-263.
- Singh, K. A. and Krishna, K.V. S. M. (1994) "Agriculture entrepreneurship: the concept and evidence" *The Journal of Entrepreneurship*, Vol 11 No 1, pp97-111.
- Smith-Hunter, A. (2006) *Women entrepreneurs across racial lines: issues of human capital, financial capital and network structures* Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, UK and Lyme, US.
- Spence, M. (1973) "Job market signalling" *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol 87 No3, pp 355-374.
- Stigler, G. J. (1961) "The economics of information" *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol 69 No3, pp 213-225.
- Stiglitz, J. E. (1983) "Risk, incentives and insurance: the pure theory of moral hazard", *The Geneva Papers*, Vol8 No2, pp 4-32.
- Struthers, J.J. (2011) "Financing and banking in alleviating poverty: microcredit and microfinance in an age of financial crises" *Journal of Social Business*, Vol 1 No 1, pp 62-77.
- Tagg, S. and Wilson, F. (2012) "Construing business owners: are men and women really different?" *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, Vol 2 No1, pp 68-82.
- Weiler, S. and Bernasek, A. (2001) "Dodging the glass ceiling? Networks and the new wave of women entrepreneurs" *The Social Science Journal*, Vol 38 No 1, pp 85-103.
- Wellman, B. (1979) "The community question: the intimate networks of East Yorkers." *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol 84 No5, pp 1201-1231.
- World Bank. (2012) "World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development", *World Bank*, Washington, DC.
- Yunus, M. (2010) "Creating the world without poverty: social business and the future of capitalism" *Public Affairs*, New York.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Yunus, M. (2011) “Vision 2050: a poverty free world, social business-a step toward creating a new global economic order” *Journal of Social Business*, Vol 1 No1, pp 7-24.

Table 1: A possible principal-agent taxonomy

Principal-Agent Indicators	Men	Women	Differences
1) Attitudes towards risk: (Assumptions: personal interest, rationality, risk aversion) ➤ Gender balance and performance	High-personal interest, (Tagg and Wilson, 2012) Rationality: Risk aversion-low	Low-personal interest (Kamal et al, 2009; Gibb, 1993) Rationality: High-risk aversion (Nziku, 2016; Nchimbi, 2002; Khayesi et al, 2014; Mazlina and Punitha, 2016)	Men - Low risk aversion (+) Women- High risk aversion(-)
2) Contracts: behavioural based v targets (outcomes) based	Aversion to behaviour based contracts (Jensen and Meckling, 1976; Mead and Liedholm, 1998) Men prefer targets based contracts	Women prefer behaviour based contracts (Essers and Benschop, 2009; Carter, et al., 2003; Carter et al, 2007; Ramadani, 2013) Aversion to targets based contracts	Based on different use of networks: ➤ Women use weak-ties networks (behaviour based) (-) ➤ Men use strong-ties networks (targets based)(+)

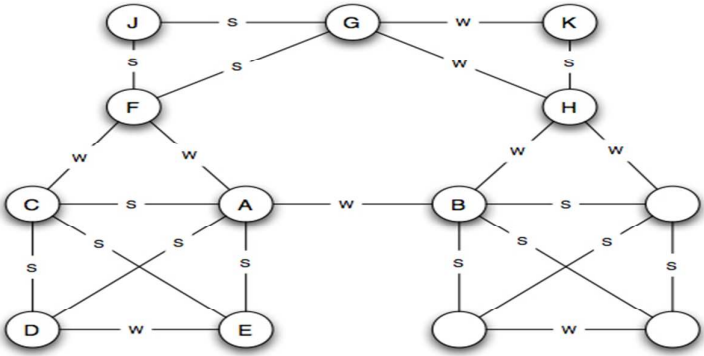
<p>3) Potential for Goal conflict:</p> <p>Incentives misalignment</p> <p>Asymmetric Information, moral hazard, adverse selection</p> <p>➤ Influence and motive</p>	<p>Asymmetric information:(Akerlof, 1970; Spence, 1973; Stigler, 1961, Stiglitz, 1983)</p> <p>For men, moral hazard and adverse selection will be higher (targets based contract/ strong ties). Emphasis on competition not cooperation between agents</p>	<p>Asymmetric information:</p> <p>For women, moral hazard and adverse selection lower (social objectives, impact of trust and role of symbolic networks/ weak ties; Dzisi, 2008, 2012; Kristiansen, 2004, Kristiansen et al, 2005)</p>	<p>Influence and motive:</p> <p>➤ Women emphasise social impact in businesses (eg: Grameen Bank model) (+)</p> <p>➤ Men motivated by high achieving/maintaining status quo (-)</p>
<p>4) Risk-sharing:</p> <p>➤ Use of networks</p>	<p>For men, networks formal, structured, and interconnected (strong ties; Ericksen and Yancey, 1977,1980)</p>	<p>For women, networks looser, informal; based on a social construct (“weak ties”) (Cetin et al, 2016;Humburt and Brindley, 2015 Khayesi et al., 2014; Drakopoulou Dodd, 2012 ; Bardasi and Sabarwal, 2009; Niederle and Vesterlund, 2007;Weiler and Bernasek, 2001 Blau, 1980, 1974)</p>	<p>Differences in use of networks:</p> <p>➤ Women use social/ informal networks to minimise risk/loss; risk-sharing/ pooling (Grameen Bank)(+)</p> <p>➤ Men use formalised networks to minimise risks(-)</p>

5)Transaction costs: (Search costs; brokers fees); economies of scale/scope	Maximise economies of scale/scope (combining loans across different projects, scaleability, Panzar and Willig, 1977;1981)	Higher transaction costs compared with males (Halkias et al, 2011; Bruhn et al, 2010; Bardasi, and Sabarwal, 2009; Jack, 2005)	Unequal transaction costs: ➤ Women lack high value assets as collateral (-). ➤ Men have high value assets(+) (Outcome depends on size and frequency of loans)
6)Verification and monitoring costs:(Relates to contracts:(type, formality/ informality, contract length, renewal terms)	Men, have lower verification and monitoring costs compared with women due to their strong track records (Baumol, 1982; Baumol et al, 1982)	Women have higher verification and monitoring costs as no track records/reliance on weak ties (Jamali, 2009; Carter et al, 2003)	Depends on contract type: (targets v behaviour based) ➤ Women prefer behaviour based contracts; causes higher verification/ monitoring costs for Principal (-) ➤ Men prefer targets based contracts; lower verification/ monitoring costs for Principal (+)

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49

Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development

Figure 1: The Strength of Weak Ties (SWT)



Source: Granovetter (1973)